

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 INR-07 L-03 ACDA-07
NSAE-00 PA-01 SS-15 PRS-01 SP-02 USIA-06 TRSE-00
H-01 NSC-05 EB-08 /074 W
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R 281737Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6619
AMEMBASSY OSLO
USMISSION NATO
INFO SECDEF WASHDC
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
USCINCEUR
CINCLANT

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 12509

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: NATO, MILI, UK, NO
SUBJECT: UK ABILITY TO SEND REINFORCEMENTS TO NORWAY

REF: OSLO 3430

1. REPORT COVERED IN OSLO PRESS (REFTEL) IS SIXTH
REPORT IN 1976-77 SESSION OF HOUSE OF COMMONS BIAPRTI-
SAN EXPENDITURE COMMITTEE, PUBLISHED JULY 26. THIS
REPORT, DONE BY THE COMMITTEE'S DEFENCE AND EXTERNAL
AFFAIRS SUB-COMMITTEE, COVERED THE ENTIRE SUBJECT OF UK
MILITARY RESERVES AND REINFORCEMENTS IN A DOCUMENT OVER
200 PAGES LONG.

2. A MAIN POINT OF REPORT IS TO EXPRESS CONCERN THAT
UNDER PRESENT ARRANGEMENTS UK REINFORCEMENTS MIGHT NOT
ARRIVE IN GERMANY AND NORWAY IN TIME AND IN THE PLANNED
NUMBERS. REPORT WARNS ABOUT "THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE
WARNING TIME AFFORDED BY THE PERIOD OF RISING TENSION
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MIGHT BE SHORTER THAN THE MINIMUM TIME-SCALE FOR COMPLETE
MOBILIZATION AND REINFORCEMENT.... IT IS DIFFICULT TO
SEE HOW THIS DANGER...CAN BE EFFECTIVELY COUNTERED
WITHIN THE CONFINES OF PRESENT FORCE-LEVELS AND
DEPLOYMENT."

3. IN THIS OVERALL CONTEXT REPORT, REFLECTING VISIT OF

SUB-COMMITTEE TO AFNORTH AT KOLSAAS IN NORWAY, CONTAINS SECTION SPECIFICALLY DEVOTED TO PROBLEM OF SENDING REINFORCEMENTS TO NORWAY. "CONCERN WAS EXPRESSED AT THE REDUCED AVAILABILITY OF CRAFT SUITABLE FOR LANDING TROOPS AND EQUIPMENT...GREATER RECOURSE IS LIKELY TO BE NECESSARY TO CIVILIAN SHIPPING," SUCH AS FERRIES. "WE WERE LEFT IN ABSOLUTELY NO DOUBT BY ALL THE OFFICERS, BRITISH AND NORWEGIAN, TO WHOM WE SPOKE, THAT UNLESS REINFORCEMENTS ARRIVED DURING THE WARNING PERIOD OF POLITICAL TENSION THEY WOULD PROBABLY NOT GET THERE AT ALL."

4. THE OTHER BASIC CONCERN OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE WAS THAT BRITAIN'S POLICY OF MAINTAINING RELATIVELY SMALL PROFESSIONAL FORCES. AND THEN IN PARTICULAR NOT MAKING FULL USE OF WHAT TRAINED RESERVES THERE ARE. WOULD MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT TO FIGHT A LONG WAR IN EUROPE WITHOUT QUICKLY HAVING TO RESORT TO NUCLEAR WEAPONS.

5. EMBOFF DISCUSSED THE REPORT BRIEFLY WITH MICHAEL BELL IN UK MOD. BELL, WHO HAD WORKED ON SUPPLYING THE EVIDENCE TO THE SUB-COMMITTEE. SAID HE CONSIDERED THE REPORT AS "NOT TOO BAD ON BALANCE," AND THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE HELPFUL FOR THE MOD IN ITS PERENNIAL BUDGET BATTLE. THE SUB-COMMITTEE HAS BEEN HARD-WORKING AND EARNEST. AND HAS TENDED TO HIGH-LIGHT AREAS IN MOD
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"WHERE WE ARE MOST VULNERABLE." THERE IS INDEED A POLITICAL CONTROVERSY OVER THE FEASIBILITY OF DEPENDING

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ON CIVILIAN SHIPPING; HOWEVER. BELL POINTED OUT THAT THERE IS NO POINT IN HAVING AN ENORMOUS AMOUNT OF MILITARY SHIPPING STANDING BY UNUSED, EVEN THOUGH THERE WILL BE LESS FLEXIBILITY IN RELYING ON CIVILIAN SHIPPING AND CREWS THAN ON DEDICATED MILITARY SHIPPING. BELL COMMENTED THAT THE SUB-COMMITTEE HAD MISUNDERSTOOD SOME NATO STRATEGIC ASSUMPTIONS. AND HAD GOT THEIR FACTS WRONG CONCERNING SOME PLANS FOR HELICOPTERS. AS USUAL, MOD WILL ISSUE AN UNCLASSIFIED COMMENT ON THE REPORT IN A FEW MONTHS.

6. BELL NOTED THAT MOD HAD SENT A BLAND GUIDANCE TELEGRAM TO THE BRITISH MISSION IN OSLO ON THE REPORT. AND READ PORTIONS OF IT TO EMBOFF. BELL COMMENTED THAT MOD HAD NOT EXPECTED ANY PRESS REACTION IN OSLO. WHEN EMBOFF GAVE HIM THE GIST OF PARAGRAPHS 1 THROUGH 3 OF REFTEL. BELL SAID, "OBVIOUSLY WE WERE WRONG." HE COM-
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MENTED THAT THE NORWEGIAN MILITARY MIGHT HAVE AN INTEREST IN DRAWING ATTENTION TO DEFENSE DEFICIENCIES.

7. COPIES OF REPORT POUCHED TO USNATO, EMBASSY OSLO, AND DEPARTMENTS OF STATE AND DEFENSE.

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Message Attributes

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